

The Washington Post PewResearchCenter

This poll was conducted for The Washington Post and the Pew Research Center by telephone February 21 to 24, 2013, among a random national sample of 1,000 adults, including users of both conventional and cellular phones.

The results from the full survey have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI) of Princeton, NJ. Produced for the Washington Post by Capital Insight.

*= less than 0.5 percent



1. As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. How about news about automatic cuts to federal spending that will take effect next week, unless the president and Congress act?

	----- Closely -----			----Not as closely----			No
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
2/24/13	51	25	26	48	19	29	1

Compare to: "The debate in Washington over automatic spending cuts and tax increases that would take effect in January..."

	----- Closely -----			----Not as closely----			No
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
12/16/12*	65	37	28	34	16	18	1
12/9/12	63	37	26	37	17	20	1
12/2/12	66	40	26	34	14	20	1
11/18/12	57	33	24	41	16	25	1
11/11/12	58	38	20	40	20	20	*
7/22/12	44	23	21	55	22	33	1

*Pew Research Center

2. How well do you feel you understand what would happen if automatic federal spending cuts take place next week? Very well, fairly well, not too well or not at all well?

	----- Well -----			----- Not Well -----			No
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
2/24/13	53	18	35	46	25	21	1
12/2/12*	57	28	29	41	22	19	2
11/11/12	58	26	32	40	23	17	2

*2012: "... automatic spending cuts and tax increases were to go into effect in January."



3. If automatic federal spending cuts take place, do you think they would have a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect on [ITEM]?

a. The U.S. economy

	Major effect	Minor effect	No effect	No opinion
2/24/13	60	25	5	11
12/2/12*	64	20	7	9
11/11/12	68	21	2	10

*2012: "If these automatic spending cuts and tax increases go into effect..."

b. Your own personal financial situation

	Major effect	Minor effect	No effect	No opinion
2/24/13	30	40	19	11

c. The federal budget deficit

	Major effect	Minor effect	No effect	No opinion
2/24/13	45	31	12	12

d. The U.S. Military

	Major effect	Minor effect	No effect	No opinion
2/24/13	55	25	10	11

4. (IF ANY EFFECT ON ECONOMY) And would the effect on the U.S. economy be mostly positive or mostly negative?

	Mostly Positive	Mostly Negative	No opinion
2/24/13	21	73	6
12/2/12*	23	71	6
11/11/12	23	70	7

*"if these automatic spending cuts and tax increases go into effect"

Q2a/Q3 NET Table

	-----Would have effect-----					
	NET	Mostly Positive	Mostly Negative	No opin.	No effect	No opinion
12/2/12	85	18	62	5	5	11
12/2/12	84	19	60	5	7	9
11/11/12	88	20	62	6	2	10

5. If an agreement to prevent automatic federal spending cuts is not reached before next week's deadline, who do you think would be more to blame (Republicans in Congress) or (President Obama)?

	Obama	Repubs in Congress	Both equally (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
2/24/13	32	45	13	1	10
2/18/13*	31	49	11	1	7
12/2/12**	27	53	12	2	6
11/11/12	29	53	10	2	7

*Pew Research Center: "If a deficit reduction agreement is not reached before the deadline..."

**2012: "If an agreement is not reached, who do you think would be more to blame..."

Compare to:

If the debt limit is not raised, the federal government will have to start shutting down many of its activities, and may not be able to send out Social Security checks, pay salaries for government workers or meet its obligations to bondholders. If this occurs, who do you think will be mainly to blame - (Obama) or (the Republicans in Congress)?

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
7/17/11*	36	42	19	1	2

*Washington Post-ABC News poll

As you may know, unless Congress and the president can agree to raise the federal debt limit soon, the government will not be able to borrow more money to fund its operations and pay its debts. If the limit is not raised, who do you think would mainly be responsible for this - (the Obama administration) or (the Republicans in Congress)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	-- Obama admin --			-- Reps in Congress --			Both	Neither	No
	NET	Strngly	Smwt.	NET	Smwt.	Strngly	(vol.)	(vol.)	opin.
6/19/11	33	24	10	42	12	30	13	4	7

*** END ***